

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

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R 111245Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6439

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3619

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, SA, XF

SUBJ: COMMENTS ON PRIMIN HOVEYDA'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF: TEHRAN 3385

1. MORNING OF APRIL 11 DCM SAW JAFAR NADIM, MFA UNDERSECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA TO JIDDA, AND ASKED HOW HE THOUGHT PM'S VISIT HAD GONE. NADIM, WHO IS NOT GIVEN TO OUTBURSTS OF ENTHUSIASM, SAID VISIT HAD GONE EXTREMELY WELL. DIMISSING KING KHALID AS "A NICE MAN" BUT NOT AN IMPRESSIVE FIGURE, NADIM SAID SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF PM'S VISIT WERE COVERED WITH PRINCE FAHD IN DEPTH AND AT LENGTH. IRANIANS FOUND FAHD IMPRESSIVE, ASTUTE AND THOUGHTFUL STATESMAN. NADIM SAID THEY HAD EXTENDED TOUR D'HORIZON OF PERSIAN GULF AREA AND MIDDLE EAST AND FOUND IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON EVERY COUNT. UNLIKE EARLIER MEETINGS WITH KING FAISAL, NO AWKWARD OR CONTENTIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS IRAN'S OCCUPATION OF

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TUMBS AND ABU MUSA WERE RAISED. NADIM SAID FAHD WAS BALANCED AND

RELAXED ABOUT IRAN'S CONTINUING PRESENCE IN OMAN AND COMMENTED ONLY THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS MILDLY OPTIMISTIC ITS NEWLY ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH PDYR WOULD INCREASE LATTER'S INCENTIVE TO WITHDRAW ALL SUPPORT FROM DHOFAR INSURGENTS. NADIM SAID HE DETECTED NO SAUDI SUSPICIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT IRAN'S ROLE IN GULF AND NOTED THAT FAHD COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON IRAN'S GROWING STRENGTH UNTAINTED BY TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS. HE SAID BOTH PARTIES AGREED ON NEED FOR CLOSER COOPERATION IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE AND TRANQUILITY IN GULF.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT "ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY" THEME THAT SEEMED TO RUN THROUGH COMMUNIQUE, NADIM REPLIED THAT THIS WAS SIMPLY REPLAY OF COMMUNIQUE THAT HAD BEEN ISSUED AT CONCLUSION OF FAHD'S VISIT TO IRAN LAST JULY. HE SAID NO SPECIAL MEANING SHOULD BE READ INTO THIS OTHER THAN THAT SAUDIS WANTED COMMUNIQUE AND "WE HAD TO SAY SOMETHING." WHEN PRESSED AS TO WHETHER ANY AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON SPECIFIC STEPS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN NEXT TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO CONCEPT OF CLOSER COOPERATION, NADIM SAID THERE HAD BEEN NONE "BECAUSE THIS WAS NOT THE SAUDI WAY." HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT STAGE HAD NOW BEEN SET FOR A VISIT TO IRAN BY KING KHALID AND HE THOUGHT A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SOON (REFTEL).

3. ON SUBJECT OF MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION NADIM SAID FAHD WAS CONCERNED ABOUT EGYPT AND TREATMENT IT WAS GETTING FROM US, MORE SPECIFICALLY FROM US CONGRESS. FAHD WAS APPROVINGLY AWARE OF ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS EGYPT BUT SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND CONGRESSIONAL RESISTANCE TO THIS POLICY. HE PUT HIS REMARKS IN CONTEXT OF NEED FOR EGYPT AND OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES TO HAVE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIETS. FAHD SAID IF US CONGRESS MAKES IT CLEAR TO EGYPT THAT US OPTION IS NOT A WORKABLE ONE, OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS SYRIA AND IRAQ, EVEN IF SO INCLINED, WILL HAVE SERIOUS SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT ATTEMPTING TO TURN AWAY FROM SOVIETS. SIMILARLY, OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES (READ JORDAN) WHO ARE FRUSTRATED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO GET HELP FROM US MAY TURN TO SOVIETS IN DESPERATION. NADIM CLAIMED THAT FAHD HAD SPECIFICALLY SAID ISRAEL HAD A RIGHT TO EXIST BUT THAT US MUST HAVE MORE EVEN-HANDED MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY IF THIS RIGHT WERE TO SURVIVE.

HELMS

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